

**Suggested Remarks**  
**Daniel Miller, Acting Chief, USAID/OEDG**  
**Launch of the Helpbook on Human Rights**  
**Issues: Extralegal Killings and Enforced**  
**Disappearances**  
**New Building Lobby, Supreme Court, Manila**  
**June 10, 2011, 10:30 a.m.**

Chief Justice Renato Corona;

Chancellor Adolf Azcuna of the Philippine  
Judicial Academy;

(Names of other dignitaries will be provided  
on site)

Distinguished guests, colleagues in  
development, friends, ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning.

Thank you very much for inviting me to the  
launch of the *Helpbook on Human Rights*  
*Issues: Extralegal Killings and Enforced*

*Disappearances.* I am honored to be here today to help open this important event and celebrate with all of you the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

This year we are also commemorating USAID's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the Philippines. Our many partnerships with the Philippines have evolved over the past fifty years, and we are very proud to have supported the reform efforts of the Philippine judiciary since the inception of the Action Program for Judicial Reform in 2001. The U.S. Government is the largest grant donor to the judiciary's reform program (approximately \$20 million from 2001 to the present). We are particularly pleased we were able to help the Supreme Court address issues related to judicial efficiency and integrity, broaden access to justice and protect human rights.

The promotion and protection of human rights is an important issue in the Philippines. In order to enforce human rights, one must ensure that no individual or institution is exempt from accountability for violations.

Impunity is at the heart of the problem. Regardless of state policy condemning extralegal killings and enforced disappearances, perpetrators will continue to violate human rights if nobody is caught, convicted and punished for their grave misdeeds. In the end, the best deterrent to human rights violations is the fair and full enforcement of the law. An environment where the risk of detection and punishment is high will make would-be perpetrators think twice and hopefully desist from carrying out extralegal killings and enforced disappearances.

The U.S. Government acknowledges the efforts of the Government of the Philippines,

particularly the leadership demonstrated by the Supreme Court, to address human rights violations. The downtrend in the incidence of extralegal killings in the last few years and the seven convictions since 2007 for the perpetrators of the murders of political activists and journalists are perhaps encouraging signs that the impunity of perpetrators is finally eroding.

Nevertheless, we recognize that measures to strengthen the enforcement of human rights laws continue to be needed. We recognize that the Philippines' capacity to prosecute, convict and punish violators is still hampered by a range of factors that include: judges, prosecutors, investigators and human rights advocates who lack information in the handling of human rights cases.

It is with these factors in mind that USAID, together with The Asia Foundation, supported the development and publication of the

*Helpbook on Human Rights Issues: Extralegal Killings and Enforced Disappearances.* This book is the result of vigorous discussions on the current human rights situation in the Philippines in the context of the criminal justice system. It identifies the gaps and corresponding recommendations in the laws and procedures of concerned government agencies. USAID hopes that this will serve as a useful and user-friendly reference for judges, law practitioners, civil society organizations, and human rights advocates on how to respond to cases of human rights violations.

We hope that the book will help all advocates handle human rights cases more effectively, and in particular, familiarize them with the legal and judicial measures to exact accountability for human rights violations.

In closing, I would like to recognize the role of the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) in making this publication possible. We sincerely hope that you will find the Helpbook relevant and useful, and we look forward to our continued partnership in upholding human rights in the Philippines.

Thank you very much and congratulations!